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SUBJECT: GERMAN PSC AMBASSADOR'S CONCERNS ABOUT IMPACT OF  
IMPASSE OVER TURKISH OBJECTIONS TO NATO-EU DIALOGUE

Classified By: USEU POL M/C Laurence Wohlers for reasons 1.5 (B/D).

¶1. (C) Summary: German PSC Ambassador (and current presidency chair of the EU Political and Security Committee) Clemens Von Goetze warned that Turkish refusal to allow NATO-EU dialogue on the EU Afghan police training mission was not only endangering the mission itself but risked damaging the Turkish accession process as well. Agreeing that Turkey had reason to be frustrated, von Goetze noted that the EU was actively exploring how to give Turkey an upgraded role in ESDP ("whatever we can do legally and politically, we will do"). However, on Turkey's key demand for access to the European Defense Agency, he said, the reality is that "no one could deliver the Cypriots" in the short-term. In the meantime, Turkish current tactics were a "miscalculation" that were hurting their long-term objectives. Given that neither Turkey nor Cyprus were prepared to consider comprehensive solutions in the short term, he added, Turkey's interest was to reinforce European perceptions that it was a strong and reliable ESDP partner, not impeding EU missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo. Von Goetze's pessimism about near-term solutions to the current impasse, and concern about the potential fall-out, were echoed by contacts at other permreps and the EU council secretariat. End Summary

¶2. (C) Reviewing the state of play over Turkish objections to NATO-EU dialogue on the EU Afghan police training mission, a clearly frustrated German PSC Ambassador Von Goetze warned that there were no obvious solutions to the current impasse. The German presidency and the EU secretariat, he said, had been working for months to find a way to overcome competing Turkish and Cypriot demands that have obstructed NATO-EU dialogue. However, an early attempt at brokering a reciprocal exchange of security agreements (Turkey with the EU, Cyprus with NATO) had been rejected by both sides. As urgency mounted to establish coordination procedures for the EU Afghan Police training mission (scheduled for launching in June 17), therefore, the EU had opted for an informal approach that would skirt the Berlin Plus question and allow the Turks a "face-saving" way to allow the NATO-EU cooperation to move forward. In this vein, according to Von Goetze, the aborted Solana invitation to an "informal" NATO-EU meeting on June 7 had not been designed to "end run" the Turks, but simply to provide all parties with a face-saving way forward.

¶3. (C) Turkish objections, von Goetze continued, created several problems. First, it throws the EU Afghan police training mission into jeopardy. While the mission could go forward in Kabul, the real value-added of the mission (expansion to the PRTs) could not go forward absent a clear understanding of questions of support from the NATO ISAF mission, including medical assistance, security etc. Second, and more importantly, the impasse risked doing real damage to the Turkish accession process, as it was providing fuel to Turkey's opponents in the EU and irritating its friends. The German presidency, he noted, had hoped to open three new

accession chapters this month and had been working hard to overcome Cypriot objections. The anger generated by perceived Turkish "blackmail" tactics would make it harder. If the Turks continue to object to similar provisions for the Kosovo mission, where the EU's role is much more critical, Von Goetze noted, Turkey's friends in the EU would be really challenged.

14. (C) In response to our query as to whether the real question was Turkey's desire for access to the European Defense Agency, Von Goetze agreed that Turkey "should have been in the EDA yesterday". But the reality was that "no one could deliver the Cypriots" on EDA right now. In the meantime, although Turkish ire was fully understandable, their present tactics were a "total miscalculation" as they were angering everyone in the EU and hurting their own long-term objectives.

15. (C) To respond at least partially to Turkish frustrations in the short-term, von Goetze continued, the EU was exploring how to give Turkey an upgraded role in ESDP, including setting up regular "Turkey-only" ESDP consultations rather than including Turkey in the larger group of ESDP contributor nations. Whatever we can do legally and politically, we will do, he said. He added that he personally had spoken regularly with the Turkish permreps to both NATO and the EU. However, his impression was that their "hands were tied" by Ankara. Indeed, he added, the recent EU-Turkey troika had been disappointing, with the Turks sticking to a tough, uncompromising line. (This last comment echoes separate comments by an adviser to Enlargement Commissioner Rehn.)

16. (C) Looking longer term, von Goetze was equally pessimistic about a global solution. Although in principle, one could envisage a larger deal that would satisfy both

Turks and Cypriots, he thought it would take quite a while before a new Turkish government would be ready to negotiate, and in the meantime, the military and secularists were not going to change their position. That taken together with impending Cypriot elections meant that conditions for any larger deal were not good in the short-term.

17. (C) Given the lack of good current options, von Goetze continued, the only viable way forward for the short term was for all sides to "keep their nerve" and not throw up further obstacles. In the run-up to the December EU Council meeting, he noted, the Turks had stayed "relatively" calm, and as a result Turkey's friends had succeeded in paving the way for opening new accession chapters (comment: the Cypriots nevertheless were able to take eight chapters off the table.). The important thing now was to keep that process moving forward, however slowly. In that vein, Turkey's interest was to reinforce European perceptions that it was a strong and reliable partner on ESDP issues. However, if Turkey now was intent on exercising its option to block NATO-EU, and thereby impede EU missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo, it "would not be doing any of us any favors".

18. (C) Comment: von Goetze has impressed us over the past months as a straight talker and a personal proponent of Turkish accession. His pessimistic comments here were echoed in other conversations we have had this week with Dutch, Danish, Italian and UK missions as well as with Council Secretariat. Across the board, our contacts have worried

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that an extension of the current impasse will only reduce sympathy for the Turks in the EU. No one saw much hope of getting the Cypriots to yield on Turkey's interest in EDA access, or even a security agreement. In an earlier conversation with us, the Cypriot PSC ambassador said as much, emphasizing Cyprus's long list of grievances against Turkey and suggesting that EDA membership would only be traded for something significant (such as access to Turkish ports). At this juncture, the polarization of attitudes we are seeing, coupled with the potential for further escalation over the question of opening additional accession chapters

later this month, and anticipation over a possible hardening of French positions suggest that Turkish-EU relations will remain strained, if not worse, in the coming months. These conversations indicate, however, that not only are there increasing challenges for the Turkey -EU relationship itself, but the negative atmosphere is increasingly impacting "separate" security objectives like the Afghan and Kosovo missions. Clearly, the Europeans are struggling in their own attempts to find a way forward.

McKinley

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